



Why is Herbie Husker smiling? Because he's performing for the most rabid—not to mention friendliest—fans in the land.

RULES OF THE ROAD

5 Things Every Visitor Needs to Know

1. **EAT LIKE A LOCAL.** Try a Runza (no, this beef-and-cabbage sandwich, which will cost you \$3 at the stadium, won't give you the run-zas) and a Fairbury hot dog (\$2), famed as the reddest wiener in the world.
2. **TAILGATE AT THE LOOP.** Nebraska is a dry campus (wink, wink), but the adult beverages flow freely here (just east of the stadium) before kickoff.
3. **GET TO THE STADIUM EARLY.** It's the only way to check out the tunnel walk, the players' grand entrance onto the field—to the accompaniment of the Alan Parsons Project's *Sirius*—that some find as entertaining as the game.
4. **CHECK OUT THE WEIGHT ROOM.** Located beneath the West Stands, Nebraska's 30,000-square-foot weight facility (right) is one of the nation's biggest.
5. **TOM OSBORNE IS KING.** The only way you won't make friends in Nebraska is to disparage the former coach, now a U.S. representative, who won his most recent election with 93% of the vote.



> RoadTrip

Lincoln, Nebraska

BY LARS ANDERSON

THEY ARE SOME OF THE FRIENDLIEST PEOPLE on the planet. Ask a Nebraskan for directions and don't be surprised when he draws you a map and hands you his phone number, insisting that you give him a ring to let him know you arrived "all super safe and sound."

But when 73,918 Nebraskans assemble in Memorial Stadium, as they will Saturday to watch their beloved Huskers play Penn State, these very nice folks will make more noise than any fans in the country. Dressed in red shirts, red pants (often of the polyester variety), red overalls, red cowboy hats—and anything else in fire-engine red they can get their hands on—they produce three hours of thunder, creating one of the great spectacles in college football. Nebraska has no other major colleges or pro franchises, so the state's

sports identity lies exclusively with the Big Red, which explains why the team's media guide is annually a best seller at the university bookstore and why Memorial Stadium has been sold out for

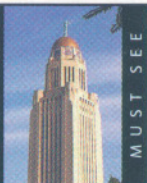
every game—258 in all—since 1962.

It's the fans, in fact, who make a road trip to Nebraska so worthwhile. In 1980 Bobby Bowden brought his Florida State team to Lincoln for the first time and eked

NATHAN KIRK/AP (TOP); TED KIRK

> WHEN & WHERE

The 48-Hour Guide to Lincoln

FRIDAY,
4 P.M.

MUST SEE

THE STATE CAPITOL. You'll get a terrific view of Nebraska's golden prairie from the top of the 400-foot capitol, which is known to locals as—we're not kidding—"The Penis of the Plains."

7:30 P.M.

MISTY'S RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE.

Members of the Nebraska marching band have been belting out tunes—ranging from fight songs to pop numbers—on the eve of home games here since the 1960s. Order the king cut of prime rib. It's pricey (\$19.95), but it's bigger than your head, and if there's one thing Nebraskans know, it's beef.

SATURDAY,
12:45 A.M.

SANDY'S. Before the bars shut down at 1 a.m., stop in at this place on the strip (which runs along O Street from Centennial to Ninth streets). Order an Elk Creek, a diabolical concoction that mixes orange juice and several different alcohols. After imbibing you'll head straight to bed—whether you want to or not.

10:05 A.M.

LAZZARI'S. Hang with former players in town for the game and eat some of Lincoln's best pizza. Give the spicy chicken slice a try (\$2.50).

1:30 P.M.

NEBRASKA VS. PENN STATE. The Huskers will try to avenge last year's 40-7 drubbing.

6:37 P.M.

BARRY'S BAR AND GRILL. The drink du jour at this postgame hot spot is red beer (tomato juice and beer, which will run you \$3). Barry's also offers burgers and sandwiches (about \$5), not to mention the opportunity to rehash the game with more than a thousand die-hard fans.

SUNDAY,
11:56 A.M.

LAZLO'S BREWERY AND GRILL. Located in the historic Haymarket section of town, Lazlo's is the oldest and largest brewery in the state. On the way out of town, drop in for its renowned French dip (\$8).



The pizza ovens at Lazzari's make it a pregame hot spot for former Huskers.

out an 18-14 win. As Bowden jogged off the field he saw something he'd never seen before: thousands of fans standing on their feet, clapping and saluting the victorious opponent. Bowden was so moved he wrote an open letter to the fans in the *Lincoln Journal Star*.

"I have never seen people with more class than I saw at Nebraska," wrote Bowden. "The Nebraska fans, players, cheerleaders, band, officials, coaches, etc., gave me living testimony of what college football should be all about." Twenty-three years later, those words still ring true.

When it comes to fashion, corny headwear is a major Husker do.



The Vitals

► **BEST LODGING:** The *Embassy Suites*, just south of campus. Doubles start at \$169.

► **BEST MUSIC:** *Zoo Bar* offers the best blues in Lincoln.

► **BEST WEEKENDS:** Oct. 18 vs. Texas A&M; Nov. 15 vs. Kansas State

► **DISTANCE FROM:** College Station, Texas: 807 miles; Manhattan, Kans.: 135; Boulder, Colo.: 503

Next Week's Road Trip:
Eugene, Ore.

THIS
week

SEPTEMBER 15, 2003 ISSUE



PRO FOOTBALL

Complete coverage of the season's first Sunday (above) and picks for this weekend's games. Plus, Peter King's Monday Morning Quarterback and Dr. Z's power rankings at si.com/football.

AIR AND SPACE

Steve Rushin goes wild with words and applies his anagram acumen to sports names.

BASEBALL

Tom Verducci takes you inside a crazy September at si.com/baseball.

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